

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-31 are pending in the present application. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 1, 6, 14 and 17 are amended, claims 20-31 are added and drawing figures 1 and 2 are replaced. No new matter has been added.

Support for amendment to claim 1 is found, for example, in paragraphs [0025]-[0027] and Figs. 3 and 4. Support for amendments to claim 6 is found in paragraph [0028] and Figs. 5 and 6B, for example. Claims 14 and 17 are amended to correct a typographical error. Support for new claims 20-31 are found throughout the specification, drawing figures and claims as originally filed.

The specification is amended to correct incorrect reference numbers.

Figs. 1 and 2 are corrected to include the related art designation in compliance with standard U.S. Patent practice.

For the following reasons, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

I. PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Applicant thanks Examiner Gravini for the courtesies extended to Applicant's representative during the April 14, 2005 Personal Interview. During the interview, agreement was reached as to the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph rejection of claim 1, and 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of claims 1-5. It was agreed that the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejection is overcome and language better defining the front support will overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 102 rejection.

II. FORMAL MATTERS

On page 2, claim 6 is objected to. Claim 6 is amended to obviate the objection.

III. REPLY TO REJECTIONS

A. 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

On page 2 of the Office Action, claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as indefinite for invoking the means-plus-function under 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph as a last feature. The specification describes the fixing means sufficiently to allow one skilled in the art to identify the structure. Thus, as agreed during the April 14, 2005 Personal Interview, the rejection is overcome.

B. 35 U.S.C. § 102 and § 103 Rejections

On pages 2-6 of the Office Action, claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 2,996,809 to Shapter (hereinafter "Shapter"); claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shapter in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,679,112 to Thompson (hereinafter "Thompson"); claims 7-8 and 18-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shapter in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,816,942 to Smith (hereinafter "Smith"); claims 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shapter in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,784,273 to Nikolai (hereinafter "Nikolai"); claims 11-12 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shapter in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,817,298 to Toma (hereinafter "Toma"); claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C.

§ 103(a) over Shapter in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,244,679 to Robertson et al. (hereinafter “Robertson”); claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shapter in view of Toma, in further view of Robertson; and claims 16-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Shapter in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,586,269 to St. Louis (hereinafter “St. Louis”). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Shapter discloses a clothes drying apparatus comprising a cabinet 10 enclosing a casing 11 (col. 1, lines 54-59, Fig. 1). A basket 18 is enclosed within the casing 11. The casing 12 is a cylindrical structure. Shapter also discloses that an access opening 14 is provided in the front wall 12 of the casing 11 and a corresponding opening 15 is provided in the cabinet 10. The front of the basket 18 has a flange 27 defining the opening 25. Near the opening 25, the front wall 12 of the casing 11 has a plurality of bearing rollers 28 secured thereto so that the front of the basket 18 is supported by the bearing rollers 28 on the front wall 12 of the casing 11 (col. 2, lines 15-19, Fig. 4). However, Shapter fails to disclose a front support, which is an annular structure having front and back ends, wherein the back end rotatably supports the open end of the rotatable drum, as recited in claim 1.

As none of Thompson, Smith, Nikolai, Toma, Robertson and St. Louis disclose the combination of features recited in claim 1, either by themselves or in combination with Shapter, claim 1 is patentable over the applied references. Claims 2-19, which depend from claim 1, are likewise patentable over the applied references and/or their combination for at least the reasons

discussed above and for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. NEW CLAIMS

New claims 20-31 are allowable. Prompt allowance of claims 20-31 is also respectfully requested.

V. CONCLUSION

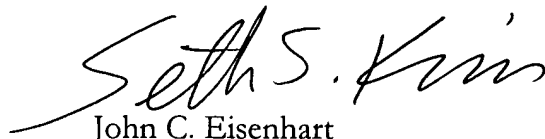
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney, Seth S. Kim, at the telephone number listed below.

Serial No. 10/730,286
Reply to Office Action of January 24, 2005

Docket No. K-0590

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachment: Figs. 1 and 2

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached drawings include changes to Figs. 1 and 2. These sheets, which include Figs. 1 and 2, replace the original sheets including Figs. 1 and 2.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet